



September 29, 2010

Interim Chair Ian McPhail, Q.C.
Commission for Public Complaints Against the RCMP
Suite 102 - 7337 137 Street
Surrey BC
V3W 1A4

BY FAX: 604-501-4095

Dear Chair McPhail:

RE: Incidents in Williams Lake, British Columbia

Please find enclosed a media release and backgrounder that will be released tomorrow by the B.C. Civil Liberties Association ("BCCLA").

The BCCLA is extremely concerned about a string of incidents in Williams Lake, British Columbia, involving interactions between aboriginal men and the local RCMP detachment. In our review, it appears to us that RCMP officers in Williams Lake move far too quickly to violence when dealing with aboriginal men in cells for minor, non-violent infractions.

Further, we are deeply concerned that one of the videos shows the local detachment head as first man in on a physical altercation with an aboriginal man who is seated and not presenting any visible threat, and that the decision appears to have been made before entering the cell to use force, regardless of the compliance or non-compliance of the prisoner. The incident injured the man's head and ribs.

Finally, we are extremely concerned that a local media outlet could report on allegations of inappropriate treatment of patrons of a local bar based on race, and that the response of the local detachment would be to cut off press releases to that media outlet rather than investigate the allegations.

We ask that you initiate an investigation into these matters immediately, and do so by examining them as a comprehensive and systemic problem in Williams Lake, rather than as isolated incidents. In particular, we ask that you investigate:

- (1) Whether excessive force was used on Lloyd Gilbert, Curtis Billy or Oren Mostad, and whether alternatives to use of force were available;
- (2) Whether detachment head Warren Brown was properly involved in the incident involving Curtis Billy, or whether his involvement was in connection to earlier interactions between Mr. Brown and Mr. Billy;
- (3) Whether Oren Mostad was properly taken into custody by Williams Lake RCMP;
- (4) Whether Oren Mostad was informed of the reason for his arrest and why charges did not proceed if he was properly arrested and informed;
- (5) Whether RCMP officers were harassing aboriginal patrons at the Boot Cabaret;
- (6) Whether the RCMP detachment engaged in profiling or disproportionate policing of Mr. Weekes' bar, the Boot Cabaret, either in part or in whole because it was patronized primarily by an aboriginal clientele;
- (7) Whether Detachment Head Warren Brown improperly retaliated against WelcomeToWilliamsLake.ca for running a story concerning Mr. Weekes' concerns about RCMP activities in relation to his aboriginal patrons;
- (8) Whether Detachment Head Warren Brown failed to follow RCMP policy by giving preferential treatment to media outlets that were in competition to WelcomeToWilliamsLake.ca because of the Weekes story, including by giving exclusives, extra access to officers for interviews, and photographs of exhibits to competing media outlets;
- (9) Whether Detachment Head Warren Brown failed to investigate Mr. Weekes' serious allegations to determine whether or not his officers were engaged in code of conduct violations, and whether such failure was itself a code of conduct violation; and,
- (10) Whether there are other cases where matters have been dismissed from court or subject to constitutional application for dismissal by defence lawyers as a result of excessive or inappropriate use of force by Williams Lake RCMP officers in the last year, in particular in relation to aboriginal men.

We have cc'd this letter to the head of the RCMP in British Columbia, Gary Bass, as it is our opinion that detachment head Warren Brown should be temporarily removed from his role as head of the detachment until the investigation is concluded given his involvement in apparently interfering with a free press in Williams Lake, failing to investigate serious

allegations of racism, and personally involving himself in a questionable use of force on a prisoner. In our respectful view, it is extremely unlikely that the RCMP will be able to maintain the confidence of the local aboriginal community given the seriousness of what has taken place here if he maintains his supervisory role while the investigation is ongoing.

All videos and materials cited in the media release and backgrounder will be available on our website at www.bccla.org tomorrow (Thursday) morning. Links to the videos will be live as of tomorrow morning. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have difficulty finding them and we will provide you with specific URLs.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Holmes", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Robert Holmes
President

*cc. RCMP Deputy Commissioner Gary Bass, RCMP E Division, VIA FAX:
604-264 3547*